



State of Connecticut

African-American Affairs Commission

State Capitol

210 Capitol Avenue – Room 509

Hartford, CT 06106

860-240-8555

Good Afternoon Senator Coleman, Representative Tong, Senator Kissel, Representative Rebimbas, Honorable members of the Judiciary Committee.

My name is Subira Gordon and I am the legislative Analyst for the African American Affairs Commission. The mission of the African-American Affairs Commission (AAAC) is to improve and promote the economic development, education, health and political well-being of the African-American community in the State of Connecticut. I am writing today to support S.B. 1114, AAC the Commission on Racial and Ethnic Disparity in the Criminal Justice System.

The AAAC has been a member of the Racial and ethnic disparities in the criminal justice system commission since its inception. The commission has been able to successfully organize events such as screenings of the color of justice as recently as last April despite the fact that it has no funding. The members of the commission are a dedicated group on individuals comprising of police chiefs, a judge, legislative commissions, and representatives from the State's attorney's office to name a few. The varying backgrounds provide a unique and beneficial perspective on the judicial system in the state. This proposal would add a representative from the Asian and pacific American affairs commission to the group. The Asian population is growing in the state and they have seen increase in their interactions with judicial system and are over represented in the criminal justice system, like African Americans and Latinos, so it is fitting that they are represented on the Commission on racial and ethnic disparities in the criminal justice system.

This legislation inserts language about the mission of the commission making it clear that the goal is to address overrepresentation of minorities in the criminal justice system. The new language removes

language that relates to juvenile justice, as in recent years there have been a number of new groups and commissions formed that are dedicated to dealing with juvenile justice issues. Also a part of this bill is the deletion of requirements that are unable to be fulfilled due to the fact that this is a volunteer board with very little staff resources.

The AAAC supports this bill because it will make the statute stronger and ensure that a dedicated group of individuals are able to fully carry out the charge of the commission and comply with the statute.

I thank you for the opportunity to testify.